Peepshow Kinetoscopes from 1894

LUIS MARTINETTI, CONTORTIONIST (1894)

Production Company Edison Mfg. Co.
Director W.K.L. Dickson
Photographer William Heise
Transfer Note Copied at 18 frames per second from a 35mm print preserved by the Academy Film Archive, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences™.
Running Time 30 seconds

CAICEDO, KING OF THE SLACK WIRE (1894)

Production Company Edison Mfg. Co.
Director W.K.L. Dickson
Photographer William Heise
Transfer Note Copied at 24 frames per second from a 35mm print preserved by the Academy Film Archive, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences™.
Running Time 25 seconds

Machines to project films onto screens were invented almost simultaneously in 1895 in France, Germany, England, and the United States. But during the previous year the new phenomenon of moving images was available exclusively through Edison's "kinetoscope," the individual viewing machine first demonstrated publicly in 1893 with *Blacksmithing Scene* (seen in Program One among the "Early Films from the Edison Company"). On Saturday, April 14, 1894, the first kinetoscope parlor opened in New York City. Twenty-five cents bought a look into five machines, each showing a film that ran less than a minute. For fifty cents, you could view all ten machines. On the first day of business, the parlor took in about $120, without advertising. The movie business had begun.

The two 1894 films here are among the eighty or so produced by the Edison Manufacturing Company that year for its kinetoscopes (the word was coined by Thomas Edison from the Greek for movement, *kinet*, and for watching, *scopos*). Most of the films drew on vaudeville performers appearing in New York City who could be persuaded to take the short trip over to Edison's West Orange, New Jersey, laboratory to have their acts "kinetographed."

Luis Martinetti, Contortionist is typical of the look of films produced in Edison's New Jersey studio (known as the "Black Maria," from slang for the police wagon Edison employees thought it resembled). Luis Martinetti, a flying-ring acrobatic contortionist, was one of the two Italian "Martinetti Brothers" who debuted in America in September 1894. "They seem to possess unlimited strength and skill, and performed several feats new to this side of the water. They were recalled several times and made a most pronounced hit," reported the *New York Clipper*. For his performance for Edison's camera on October 11, 1894, Luis was paid $14.20. (The "R" on the image is not a registration mark but indicates that the film was shot for the Raff & Gammon Company, then Edison's exclusive distributor of kinetoscope machines in North America.)

Caicedo, King of the Slack Wire, in contrast, presents an act that wouldn't fit into the small studio and so was filmed in the backyard of Edison's facility. The Venezuelan rope walker Juan Caicedo had been appearing in New York since May 1894 at Koster & Bial's Music Hall (until being replaced there by Martinetti in September). The New Jersey *Orange Chronicle* reported on Caicedo's performance for the camera on July 25, 1894: "A remarkable exhibition was given at the Edison laboratory on

Wednesday morning, when Signor Caicedo, the king of the tight rope dancers, who has been appearing at Koster & Bial's, came out and was photographed by Professor W.K.L. Dickson. . . . Those who have seen Signor Caicedo perform his marvelous acts need no description of them. The kinetographic 'Black Maria,' as it is called, in which the pictures are usually made, was of course not available for the purpose, as it would have been impossible to stretch a tight rope in the limited space of the building. The tight rope of wire was therefore stretched in the open air directly north of the building. It is the first time that any kinetographic pictures have been taken in the open air, and the results are looked forward to with interest." Because the film was photographed at around 40 frames per second, there is a slow-motion effect even at the 24 frames per second seen here.—SS

About the Music

Thomas Edison had originally hoped to combine kinetoscope machines with phonographs, so that customers could hear recorded music while watching the films. In fact, only a few such synchronized machines were made. But when kinetoscopes gave way to projected motion pictures, most of the early exhibitions took place in vaudeville theaters. In such venues the acts were routinely accompanied by live music in popular styles (songs, dances, marches, etc.), just as were performances in circuses and the like. These traditions formed the basis for what I played here.

To make the films a complementary pair, I used once familiar songs and rendered them in contrasting styles. (The films being so short, each song is pared down to its essential tune.) Martinetti twists to a famous circus ballad, "[The Man on] The Flying Trapeze" (Leybourne, Lee?, 1868), played quietly, in a low register, with serpentine figures. Caicedo leaps high to a vaudeville favorite, "Ta! Ra! Ra! Boom De Ay!" (Sayers?, 1891), played "big" to match the slow-motion drama.—MM

About the Preservation

Both films came to the Academy Film Archive through the generosity of Ray Phillips, who has built (or rebuilt) kinetoscope

machines for museums around the world and is author of *Edison's Kinetoscope and Its Films* (1997, Greenwood Press). *Caicedo, King of the Slack Wire* was copied from a print saved by the Archives du film at Bois d'Arcy, France.

Further Reading For an overview of the earliest America cinema, see Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (1990, Univ. of California Press).

INTERIOR NEW YORK SUBWAY, 14TH STREET TO 42ND STREET (1905)

Production Company American Mutoscope and Biograph Co.
Director / Photographer G.W. Bitzer
Transfer Note Copied at 18 frames per second from a 35mm negative preserved by the Museum of Modern Art.
Running Time 5 minutes

This film documented New York City's newest marvel, the subway, less than seven months after its opening. What would become the largest system in the world was inaugurated after decades of political wrangling and engineering challenges on October 27, 1904, and photographed by the Biograph cameras on May 21, 1905.

The film is not as simple as it first appears. It required coordinating three trains: the one we watch, the one carrying the camera, and a third (glimpsed on the parallel track) to carry the bank of lights. Films that put the spectator at the front of a train had long been a popular novelty, and they became a brief craze later in 1905 with "Hale's Tours," which actually sat audiences in mock train carriages. *Interior New York Subway, 14th Street to 42nd Street*

appears to consist of a single shot, although Billy Bitzer paused his camera at least once to shorten our journey. (Bitzer is best known for his later cinematography for D.W. Griffith's films, including *The Lonedale Operator* in Program Two). We travel beneath Manhattan's East Side on the Interborough Rapid Transit (IRT) from Union Square at 14th Street to Grand Central Station at 42nd Street, where more elegantly dressed subway patrons must never have been recorded.

The visual syncopation of the pillars in the subway tunnel was difficult to record—both on film and on our transfer to video—and was a cause for concern when the subway opened. "Is subway travel injurious to the eyes?" the *New York Times* asked in its opening day reportage, and it provided a practical answer: "A well known oculist says that looking at the rows of white columns is very straining. Therefore, don't look at them."—SS

About the Music In 1905 musicians might have thought to accompany this film with marches, or perhaps songs whose titles evoked New York. I took a more fanciful approach, hoping to do justice to the film's beautiful, almost abstract visual qualities. The music is mostly improvised but based on "The Mill," a once well-known piano piece by Adolf Jensen (1837–79). It can be found in Erno Rapée's *Motion Picture Moods*, indexed under "Railroad." Once the subway train stops at Grand Central Station and platform patrons come into view, a change of pace seemed in order; so I switched to a warmer and more intimate period piece—the song hit "Ida! Sweet as Apple Cider" (Leonard, Munson, 1903).—MM

About the Preservation This film was preserved by the Museum of Modern Art from the original Biograph camera negative.

THE LAND BEYOND THE SUNSET (1912)

Production Company Thomas A. Edison, Inc.
Director Harold Shaw
Writer Dorothy G. Shore
Cast Martin Fuller (Joe, the newsboy), Mrs. William Bechtel (his grandmother), Bigelow Cooper (the minister), and Walter Edwin (the manager of the Fresh Air Fund)
Transfer Note Copied at 18 frames per second from a 35mm print preserved by the George Eastman House.
Running Time 14 minutes

Most one-reel films—considered full-length before multi-reel features gained popularity after 1913—squeeze elaborate plotlines into their quarter-hour running time. *The Land Beyond the Sunset*, an Edison one-reeler filmed around New York City in 1912, instead takes its unhurried story through diverse genres: from a social-problem drama through a pastoral fantasy and into an unclassifiable poetic finale.

Joe, a tattered newspaperboy living in the tenements with his abusive, alcoholic grandmother, gets a ticket from the benevolent volunteers of the Fresh Air Fund. This nonprofit organization, founded by a Protestant minister in 1877, provided brief summer trips away from the unhealthy slums. (More than 120 years later, the organization still annually provides vacations for three thousand inner-city New York children to its camps in the Hudson River valley.) Although Edison collaborated on films with the Red Cross and other charities, one wonders how fully the Fresh Air Fund sanctioned its depiction. The female volunteers, solicitous though they are, lose track of Joe after filling him with a fairy tale about the happy "land beyond the sunset."

He wanders off to find a boat and drifts away into the horizon.

Following the inviolable pattern, *The Land Beyond the Sunset* valorizes the healing powers of the country for urban ills. The little-known director Harold Shaw—the film is sometimes attributed to J. Searle Dawley—clearly had an eye for both landscape and city compositions. Where a D.W. Griffith one-reeler would presume that taking a slum child to the country was in itself a happy ending—see his *A Child of the Ghetto* (1910)—this film uses fantasy to arrive at a less sanguine resolution. The ambiguity of the final longshot—does Joe die? or drift into a transcendent realm?—makes for something quite rare.

Thomas Edison proved better at managing technology than overseeing moviemaking. *The Land Beyond the Sunset* comes near the end for his film company. A federal antitrust suit in 1912 against the Motion Picture Patents Company, which Edison dominated, was one blow. The death knell was Edison's adherence to single-reel dramas as the rest of the industry moved toward longer features. The later Edison one-reelers have long been unavailable for public viewing and have generally been dismissed by scholars. With recent and forthcoming preservation, they can be reassessed.—SS

About the Music

For this marvelously crafted, heartfelt, and disturbing film, I turned first to some of Schumann's piano miniatures from his *Album for the Young*: notably, an exquisitely simple piece appropriately titled "The Poor Orphan Child." In addition, I felt a need for a "maternal" soprano voice, singing songs periodically to comment on the film's meanings. The singer is Margaret O'Keefe (a colleague at MIT), and the selections consist entirely of songs available to singers at the time the film was made. One of these, "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere" (Pounds, Fearis, 1897), was reissued in 1901, after being sung at the funeral of President McKinley. It is heard at the beginning and again near the end of the film, thus constituting a kind of theme song. Indeed, it seems very like the sort of

lullaby the boy of the story might imagine being sung to him by his absent mother.

It should be noted that the practice of using songs in accompaniments to films was, if not widespread, at least recognized as a possibility throughout the silent period. It can be traced back to the century's first decade, when many small theaters featured vocalists as part of the show. Although most were employed to perform songs illustrated by lantern slides, some began to sing for the films as well, and received approving comments from observers.—MM

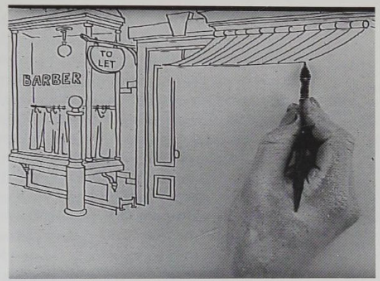
Further Information For the charitable work of the Fresh Air Fund, see www.freshair.org.

I'M INSURED (1916)

Production Company Gaumont American (Mutual Pictures, distributor)
Writer / Animator Harry S. Palmer
Transfer Note Copied at 24 frames per second from a 35mm print preserved by the UCLA Film and Television Archive.
Running Time 3 minutes

Except for a few experiments, hand-drawn animated cartoons weren't regularly made in America until 1914. They were simply too labor intensive compared with live-action films. Within the next two years, however, production exploded thanks to transparent celluloid, tracing paper, printed backgrounds, and other time-saving innovations.

Harry Palmer, creator of *I'm Insured*, had embraced celluloid animation in 1915 for his socially satiric *Keeping Up with the Joneses* until a patent-infringement suit forced him to discontinue that series. He returned to the Flushing, New York, studios of Gaumont American with an even more pared down animation style for a new series called *Kartoon Komics*. *I'm*



Insured, a "Komic Kartoon" from October 1916, is an effective example of the style that allowed animators rapidly to complete one-person projects. Palmer attempted to turn out a finished short every week, a goal he didn't quite reach.

I'm Insured opens with a hand sketching its first scene. Harry Palmer's few other surviving films likewise begin with an "out of the inkwell" line drawing, a device familiar from films by Winsor McCay and elaborated later by Max and Dave Fleischer. Palmer called his creations "animated news cartoons," and their stylistic origin in newspaper cartoons is reinforced by the balloon dialogue from this film's hapless, unnamed hero.

Putting the best face on his lawsuit defeat, Palmer expressed pleasure in switching to the *Kartoon Komics*, a series rare at the time for having no continuing protagonist: "We found that *Keeping Up with the Joneses* was entertaining, but we felt that there would be greater interest in it [the *Kartoon Komics*] for the artist, because there is the infinite variety which is not possible where week after week we are bound to the scenarios of the Jones family."—SS

About the Music

For this "kartoon" two pieces suffice, one of high character, one low. The first is the "Gavotte" from Ambroise Thomas's formerly popular opera *Mignon* (1866). During the silent period gavottes—moderately quick, courtly dance pieces—were mostly considered quaint relics, suitable for costume dramas and stories of "olden" days. But this one has enduringly youthful charm and nimble rhythms, so I used it to grace Harry Palmer's elegant, fast-motion line drawing at the cartoon's beginning. Once the story begins, I moved to "The Moving Picture Rag: Characteristic March Two Step" by one "Danmark" (otherwise unknown to me). This piece occupies the last page of the *Remick Folio of Moving Picture Music* (1914). It is thus about the same age as the cartoon and has the right tone for the latter's many gags—whose effectiveness I also tried to "insure" with some improvisatory touches.—MM

About the Preservation

Funding for the UCLA Film and Television Archive preservation of this film was provided by Jere Guldin, the Silent Society of Hollywood Heritage, and the International Animated Film Society, ASIFA-Hollywood.

Further Viewing

Two of Harry Palmer's *Keeping Up with the Joneses* cartoons, along with nineteen other early animated films preserved by the Library of Congress, are included in *Origins of American Animation, 1900–1921* (Library of Congress Video Collection, vol. 3), distributed on VHS tape by both Smithsonian Video and Unipix. The same collection of cartoons can also be downloaded or streamed from the Library of Congress's American Memory site at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/oahtml.

SNOW WHITE (1916)

Production Company	Famous Players Film Co. (Paramount Pictures Corp., distributor)
Director	J. Searle Dawley
Writer	Winthrop Ames (under the pseudonym "Jesse G. White"), from his 1912 stageplay *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and the 1812 folktale by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm
Producer / Photographer	H. Lyman Broening
Cast	Marguerite Clark (Snow White), Dorothy G. Cumming (Queen Brangomar, her stepmother), Creighton Hale (Prince Florimond), Lionel Braham (Berthold, the huntsman), and Alice Washburn (Witch Hex)
Transfer Note	Copied at 18 frames per second from a 35mm tinted print preserved by the George Eastman House; 6 reels.
Running Time	63 minutes

For the eighty years before its George Eastman House restoration, this 1916, six-reel *Snow White* was known primarily from Walt Disney's recollection of seeing it at a Kansas City matinee for newsboys. *Snow White* stuck in his mind, he said, partly because of an unusual exhibition format in which the film was rear-projected onto four screens arranged in a square around which the audience sat. From his seat the fifteen-year-old Disney could see the film twice. His memory was inspiration for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), the first animated feature.

Snow White was a vehicle for the now forgotten star Marguerite Clark. By her retirement from films in 1921, she surpassed even Mary Pickford in popularity as an adult actress playing characters half her age. Like other stage stars, Clark had been tempted into films only when they reached feature length, signing in 1914 with Adolph Zukor's Famous Players Film Company. With the motto "Famous Players in

Famous Plays," Zukor had pioneered the adaptation of full-length stageplays to the screen.

Trade papers were surprised that two more years elapsed before Famous Players (becoming known as Paramount Pictures) put the thirty-three-year-old Clark in *Snow White*. This would be her seventeenth feature. "That they have not before delved into the unlocked treasures of her past stage successes is remarkable," commented *Motion Picture News*. The Broadway *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* had opened in November 1912 and starred Clark for two seasons. The stageplay was by theatrical impresario Winthrop Ames, director of so many of the era's artistically ambitious plays, who saw in the Brothers Grimm tale the possibility of the first major play especially for children.

The film version, also written by Ames, is true to its theatrical origins, with deep proscenium interior staging. (The moss-covered forest exteriors were shot in Georgia.) Director J. Searle Dawley, a collaborator with Edwin S. Porter back to 1907, employs a static camera that moves only to introduce Marguerite Clark as she emerges from a barrel in the royal kitchen.

Departing from the Grimm tale, Ames borrowed heavily from another European folktale with an envious stepmother, "Cinderella." In this resulting version the young princess Snow White has been relegated to a kitchen servant but also has an opportunity to dance with the handsome prince well before her "death." The wicked stepmother queen, the truth-telling mirror, and the seven dwarfs are all drawn directly from Grimm, as are details usually missing from adaptations, such as the poisoned comb. Dorothy Cumming, who plays the stepmother, is best remembered as the terrifying mother who greets Lillian Gish with a bloody butcher knife in Victor Seastrom's *The Wind* (1928). Creighton Hale, the prince, would play small character parts through the 1950s. The film's prologue—in which Santa Claus brings dolls that transmute into miniature

cast members—was devised for the film's Christmas Day 1916 release. It suggests too the influence on the film of nineteenth-century English stage pantomime, typically presented over the Christmas season and based on fairy tales.

For the jaded *Variety*, this fairy tale's appeal to children was the most that could be admitted: "How anyone could expect those possessing adult minds to sit through this feature is a mystery." Elsewhere the film drew raves, with *Photoplay* mocking *Variety*'s reviewer: "Poor chap! As far as he is concerned the world of imagination is shut behind an unclimbable fence."

The Brothers Grimm tale inspired other silent films, including a 1902 short and a 1917 three-reeler. Among the more extreme mutations in the sound era are Max and Dave Fleischer's 1932 cartoon with Betty Boop as Snow White, Bob Clampett's infamous *Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs* (1942), and *Snow White and the Three Stooges* (1961). This 1916 version certainly softens the folktale's savage edges, but no film has been willing to follow the Grimms' method for killing off the wicked queen at Snow White's wedding celebration: "Then they put a pair of iron shoes into the fire until they glowed, and she had to put them on and dance in them. Her feet were terribly burned, and she could not stop until she had danced herself to death."—SS

About the Music

In its surviving state, *Snow White* is more fragmented than films we are now used to seeing and, while beautifully presented, shallower than other films of fairy tales we have come to treasure. As suggested above, it is much less "Grimm" than the tale from which it descends. For these very reasons, a score can do wonders for the film, smoothing it out, tying incidents together, and adding emotional depth. Ultimately it became one of my favorite challenges in this anthology, and I have sought to grace *Snow White* with the most apt and engaging repertoire I could find.

Observing the theatrical settings, costumes, and staging, I thought of ballet scores and other theater music. Avoiding Tchaikovsky's overly familiar works, I delved into mostly French

repertoire. For example, I found the melancholy "Passepied" by Délibes (written as part of his score for Victor Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse* in 1884) to be an affecting support to the early scenes.

This type of music stands in the wings, however, compared with the many romantic piano pieces the score contains. They range in mood from the piquant and sentimental to the mysterious and melancholy. Marguerite Clark's vivacious yet small-scale portrayal of Snow White, for example, brought to mind Ede Poldini's "La Poupée valsante" (The waltzing doll, circa 1900), a sparkling morsel, once very popular. The main sources for this kind of music were Mendelssohn's collections of *Songs Without Words* and Grieg's *Lyric Pieces*. The latter's Nordic style is particularly suited to elements of the film: His "Halling," "March of the Trolls," and "Wedding Day at Trollhagen" all accompany scenes of the dwarfs, and his wonderful "In Ballad Style" serves perfectly as a dirge for Snow White's "death."

Of necessity, not all of the repertoire sits so high. In filling out the lengthy score, I had recourse to salon pieces by many lesser piano composers (including Theodore Lack's "Cabaletta," and G.W. Warren's "Song of the Robin") and pieces published for movie pianists in the teens and twenties. Two of my favorites in the latter group are G.H. Clutsam's sinister "Prologue," heard during scenes with Witch Hex, and Henry Sawyer's good-humored "Ghost March," heard when the dwarfs count off after they first come home and later when they put Snow White to bed. I hope this musical panoply helps viewers to enjoy the film's dreamlike, imaginative realms, as well as its peculiar digressions and unpredictable leaps.—MM

About the Preservation Many American silent films lost in the United States have been salvaged by foreign archives from prints distributed internationally, although their ultimate survival remains precarious. Long thought lost, a single tinted nitrate print of *Snow White* with Dutch intertitles was saved by the Nederlands Filmmuseum. A few of the original sequences do not survive—or may have been cut for European release—including the infant Snow White's delivery by stork, a special effect praised in reviews. The George Eastman House re-created the lost original intertitles by translating the Dutch back into English, drawing phrasing from Winthrop Ames's playscript, and duplicating the fonts used by Famous Players in this period. The complex 1998 restoration was made possible by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Eastman House Council, and Isabella Rossellini.

From BEAUTIFUL JAPAN (1918)

Production Company The Benjamin Brodsky Moving Picture Co.

Producer Benjamin Brodsky

Transfer Note Four sequences copied at 18 frames per second from a 16mm print preserved by the National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution.

Running Time 15 minutes

From the first days of film exhibition, celebrated travelers used movies to enliven their public lectures, as earlier adventurers had used lantern slides and dioramas. *Beautiful Japan*, excerpted here, is an epic travel film for 1918, running over two hours and, as an intertitle proudly announces, touring 5,800 miles of the country. The lecturer generally accompanying screenings was Benjamin Brodsky, based in Los Angeles, first seen here tracing his itinerary from Tokyo on the map of Japan. This film followed *Brodsky's Trip Through China* (1917), on

which he claimed to have spent ten years shooting one hundred thousand feet of film.

Beautiful Japan seems to have been sponsored by the Imperial Japanese Railway to promote tourism. BRODSKY'S MOVIES TOUR THRU JAPAN proclaims the banner across a train car pulling out of Tokyo. Our excerpts sample three aspects of the country. Brief shots of a ship launch at Yokohama reveal Japan as an industrial power at the end of World War I. On the large northern island of Hokkaido, the tour encounters a village of the indigenous people of Japan known as the Ainu (the word for "humans" in their language). The climax of the Ainu's annual *iyomante*, or "bear-sending," ceremony that the film documents is the strangulation of a bear cub. (Viewers may be glad to know that no such killing is shown in the full film, and it is likely that Brodsky asked the villagers to stage parts of the ceremony for his camera.) In the Pacific port city of Shizuoka ("Shidzuoka" in the film) south of Tokyo, we glimpse the region's tea production and "traditional" culture. As an intertitle puts it, "The busy Geisha girls are unwearing [i.e., unwearying] throughout the Cherry Blossom Festival in gracefully entertaining the foreign visitors attracted by Japanese scenic beauties."

Travel films tell us as much—probably more—about the attitude of the traveler as about the place visited. *Beautiful Japan* intends to be little more than a travelogue. As the years go by, however, it becomes a political and ethnographic time capsule. When the United States entered World War I in 1917, Japan became its ally against Germany. Brodsky's film was one of at least two American travel features of 1917–18 that found Japan more "beautiful" than it had seemed before. The point of view and the intertitle language also cannot help being distinctly American. The final excerpted shots of Benjamin

Brodsky dancing in the geisha house remind one that part of a geisha's training was to learn to laugh with her clients.—SS

About the Music

As mentioned above, some travel films were "accompanied" by lecturers, depending upon the venue and the exhibitor's aims. Benjamin Brodsky not being available to supply us with his words, however, it is left to music to vivify, clarify, and unify this footage. As it happens, because several segments show dance performances, much of the music has a more or less "realistic" function.

This is not, however, intended as an "ethnically authentic" score: Brodsky shows us Japan through American eyes. He presented his films to American audiences, and when such films were exhibited in commercial theaters during the twenties, they were almost always accompanied by Americanized "Japanese" music. That is the tradition followed here, with no difficulty, because throughout the silent period every musical anthology contained great quantities of so-called "national" music pieces to be played for scenic shorts as well as for features set in foreign lands.

I have drawn several pieces from volume 2 of J.S. Zamecnik's *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music* (1913); one of them is an "Oriental Veil Dance," which accompanies the scene of the girl dancing on a public street. I also have drawn from Otto Rapée's anthology *Motion Picture Moods* (1924), including his reasonably authentic version of the Japanese national anthem for the early scene of Brodsky mapping his tour. Two other pieces from Rapée are by Otto Langey and H.R. Shelley; these accompany the tour of the Asano shipyard and the lengthy "Turtle and Crane Dance" by the geisha. (Still another section of Shelley's piece, of a very different character, accompanies portions of Rev. Sensho Sasaki's *Japanese American Communities*, in Program Three.)

Only for the final scene is there a rupture of stylistic consistency: When Brodsky takes one of the geisha in his capacious arms and swings her around the floor, I switch to the strains of "Goodbye Girls, I'm Through" (Golden, Caryll, 1914)—ironically, a song that first appeared in the Broadway "musical fantasy" *Chin Chin*.—MM

About the Preservation

All that is now known to exist among Brodsky's films is a single 16mm print of *Beautiful Japan*, from which the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History made the preservation copy excerpted here. The print was donated to the Smithsonian by Sarah Morris (Mrs. William Machold), daughter of Roland Morris, U.S. ambassador to Japan at the time the film was made. Although the visual richness of the film's original 35mm format has been lost, it is fortunate that the 16mm reduction print survives.

From RURAL LIFE IN MAINE (ca. 1930)

Filmmaker Elizabeth Woodman Wright

Transfer Note Two sequences copied at 19 frames per second from a 16mm print preserved by Northeast Historic Film.

Running Time 12 minutes

This subtle footage captures rural life with a grace rare among amateur filmmakers. Elizabeth Woodman Wright (1885–1961) bought a 16mm Kodak movie camera in 1928 and over the next six years sketched her family's summer farm with the eye of a landscape artist. Wright did not create precisely ordered documentaries with intertitles (as in *Cologne*, Program One), nor did she take part in the organized Amateur Cinema League (as did Archie Stewart; see *Early Amateur Sound Film*, Program Two). Rather, her films speak with a fluid pace that suits her pastoral subject.

The two sequences reproduced here come from the same reel, probably taken in the summer of 1930. The flag flapping briskly in the first shot underscores the Wrights' name for their farm, "Windy Ledge," located inland in southwestern Maine, in the town of Paris. The scenes of clearing fields and woods, harvesting hay with horse-powered machinery, and shingling the barn capture everyday work and also a sense of play from the children who assist.

Maine farming had been in decline since the 1880s—in numbers both of farms and of acres under cultivation—and these elegiac images document disappearing practices. The tie-clad supervisor may now suggest *Way Down East*'s squire come to life and also a genuine regional tradition of self-sufficient small farming. The fiddler seen briefly was a renowned figure, Mellie Dunham (1853–1931), who, after retiring as an expert snowshoe maker in nearby Norway, Maine, toured the Keith Theatre circuit and published *Mellie Dunham's 50 Fiddlin' Dance Tunes* in 1926.

While professional cinematography was becoming a male enclave, magazine ads for amateur movie cameras in the 1920s were promoting filmmaking for women through images of women filming their families and nature. If those were limitations, Elizabeth Woodman Wright nevertheless filmed domestic rural life with a casually confident eye beyond anything that survives from professional cameramen.—SS

About the Music

For this gentle and touching amateur documentary, the last in this anthology, I relied almost entirely on traditional songs and dances, many widely known to residents of Maine. The exceptions come at the beginning and end: For the flag raising and lowering it seemed natural to play the customary bugle call "To the Colors." The subsequent music commences with

Maine's state song—"State of Maine," by Roger Vinton Snow—followed by "The Dearest Spot on Earth" (W.T. Wrighton) and moves to several other poignant tunes, all heard in passing, to sustain the mood.

When the second sequence begins, the music is enriched by a country fiddle (played by a colleague at MIT, George Ruckert, for whom this music is a cherished but nonprofessional pursuit). The prime inspiration for adding this instrument, of course, is the footage of Mellie Dunham, featured later in the sequence. We begin with Stephen Foster's "Annie Laurie," as the family celebrates an elderly woman's birthday outdoors. Two traditional fiddle tunes are later heard, one a jig ("Jackson's Morning Brush," while the fiddler plays), the other a reel ("Pat'nella," for the shots of a woodsman hauling logs). When the footage changes to a landscape panorama at day's end, we round things off with a reprise of "The Dearest Spot on Earth." Like "Annie Laurie," this song has such graceful simplicity that it nowadays conveys an almost aching nostalgia—as does much of the film, to the receptive viewer. There is a final humorous twist: a tiny epilogue (it is definitely *not* part of the previous sequence), which the fiddler accompanies solo. He uses an appropriate tune that all who have lived in Maine must surely recognize.—MM

About the Preservation

The films of Elizabeth Woodman Wright were preserved by Northeast Historic Film through *Treasures of American Film Archives* funding.

Further Viewing

Northeast Historic Film distributes more than fifty VHS videotapes about New England, including many early films from its collection. Among available titles are the 1930 logging film *From Stump to Ship*, a 1920 record of Maine's northernmost region, *Aroostook County*, and pre-1920 shorts compiled as *Earliest Maine Films*. The tapes are for sale to the public and available for free loan to NHF members. The catalog, ordering,

and membership information are online at the NHF web site: www.oldfilm.org.

THE NEWS PARADE OF 1934

Production Company Hearst Metrotone News (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, distributor)
Release Date December 19, 1934
Narrator Edwin C. Hill
Transfer Note Copied from a 35mm print preserved by the UCLA Film and Television Archive.
Running Time 10 minutes

For most of the twentieth century, the moviegoing experience was inconceivable without a newsreel. Released to theaters once or twice a week and running about ten minutes, newsreels at their best were more than loose anthologies of political and sporting events, scandals and ceremonies. As evident from the issue seen here, a roundup of the year 1934, newsreels had arguments to make.

Hearst Metrotone News began with the coming of sound film in 1929 and survived into 1967, the final year of newsreel production. It was controlled by newspaper mogul William Randolph Hearst, who had been producing silent newsreels since 1914. Each December, in place of a regular issue, Hearst Metrotone News usually put together a year-end summary, with editing and voice-over even more fast-paced.

At the close of 1934, there were few signs that the Depression would ever end. One response was to look to strong leaders, a yearning evident in the content and also the structure of this *News Parade of 1934*. In America, Franklin D. Roosevelt was two years into his first term, his New Deal reforms affirmed by the 1934 congressional elections. In Europe, despotic leaders offered quick fixes that seemed to elude bickering democracies. Hitler had come to power the previous year, and the reel

laments the 1934 death of Germany's ineffectual president, Paul von Hindenburg. The two now obscure European dictators whose 1934 assassinations are recounted had also dismantled their countries' constitutions. Yugoslavia's Alexander I was murdered on a state visit to Marseilles, France, in October. (Film of the event was one of the great scoops in newsreel history, although the killing itself was best captured by the rival Fox-Movietone News). Austria's "Diminutive Chancellor Dollfuss"—a typically irreverent newsreel alliteration—was murdered by Nazis in July. The reel's largest gaff in hindsight seems to be its praise for Benito Mussolini's military response to this assassination as "a significant gesture that calls a halt to Germany's ambitions." In 1934 Mussolini's Italian form of fascism was still widely praised in the United States for its "efficiency."

The News Parade of 1934 makes an emotional argument through its organization alone, which moves from chaos to confident solutions. After the frightening scenes of European politics and of droughts, fires, and earthquakes around the world, we move to America's rule of law. Bruno Hauptmann is arrested for the Lindbergh kidnapping, "public enemies" John Dillinger and Baby Face Nelson meet death by "the government's gun," and the new Alcatraz prison makes escape for others impossible. Triumphs of engineering, feats of aviation, advances in production, overseen by President Roosevelt in close-up, bring the ten minutes to an uplifting climax for American audiences.

The apotheosis of FDR—who floats spectrally over a Washington, D.C., parade in the last shot—might be surprising from William Randolph Hearst, whose disdain for the New Deal's common man is evident in the reel's equation of labor strikes with rioting mobs. But in 1934 strong leaders appealed to

political philosophies left and right. Again, only hindsight undercuts the comfort of the conclusion, when at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii "the president finds Uncle Sam's outpost defenders on the alert!"—SS

About the Preservation The missing music between sequences arises from the way the Hearst producers recut the newsreels after initial release. For each issue, they generally kept one copy of the negative and the print and cut both into component stories for easier reuse. The Hearst Corporation donated this material to the UCLA Film and Television Archive, which has worked backward from synopsis sheets to reassemble complete newsreels from the small film rolls. Often the original print—which alone holds the release soundtrack—was more severely truncated, as is the case with *The News Parade of 1934*. The sound goes silent where only the negative survives. UCLA's Hearst Metrotone News Collection consists of some 27 million feet of film.

ROSE HOBART (1936)

Filmmaker Joseph Cornell
Music Nestor Amaral and Orchestra
Transfer Note Copied at 17 frames per second from a 16mm tinted print preserved by Anthology Film Archives.
Running Time 19 minutes

Not for decades would there be another film remotely resembling Joseph Cornell's *Rose Hobart*, first screened at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York in December 1936. The audience apparently found it unintelligible and inept, with the significant exception of Salvador Dalí—in town for the Museum of Modern Art's surrealist show—who grew so enraged that he kicked over the 16mm projector, which Cornell himself was operating. Dalí, the most envious of artists, had some idea of

what Cornell had achieved.

Joseph Cornell (1903–72) is now recognized as one of America's major twentieth-century artists. He is known for his carefully crafted glass-fronted boxes containing enigmatic arrangements of found objects and images. *Rose Hobart*, also something of a rearranged found object, is one of his few films completed alone. (In the 1950s and 1960s he made at least twenty others in collaboration with younger avant-garde filmmakers Rudy Burckhardt, Larry Jordan, and Stan Brakhage.)

If Cornell was an artist who couldn't paint, he may also have been the first independent filmmaker to make a film without touching a camera. The montage of editing became his way of bringing the collage principle of his boxes into filmmaking. *Rose Hobart* is essentially a re-editing of a ludicrous 1931 jungle melodrama titled *East of Borneo*—also known as *Ourang* and *White Captive*—with a few shots from unidentified other films added. Among Cornell's collecting passions were old movies, and he had bought 16mm prints by the pound at a New Jersey warehouse. His film is named for *East of Borneo*'s lead actress, Rose Hobart, who becomes the locus of vague evocations of desire and dread. His edit is rough and disconcerting: Shots begin just as scenes are fading out, glances have uncertain objects, continuity is mismatched. However, Cornell also would make three alterations when exhibiting the film that helped to give his fragments a strange continuity. He showed the black-and-white film through a piece of blue or purple glass. He turned off the sound and projected it at so-called "silent speed." (Sound films are standardized at 24 frames per second; most 16mm projectors have a "silent speed" option at 16 to 18 frames per second.) Finally, he provided musical accompaniment in the form of Brazilian samba records bought from a remainder bin. (His presentation,

including music from the same records, is reproduced here.)

Cornell was a modern artist who looked backward for inspiration. He found dialogue films to be an "empty roar" and wrote—in the context of a tribute to Hedy Lamarr—of what could be salvaged from them: "Among the barren wastes of the talking film there occasionally occur passages to remind one again of the profound and suggestive power of the silent film to evoke an ideal world of beauty, to release unsuspected floods of music from the gaze of a human countenance in its prison of silver light." *Rose Hobart* makes its critique on these terms: Hollywood fails in its banal screenplays, not its raw images.

Although it is not immediately evident, Cornell crafted through montage something approaching a new story line. *Rose Hobart* opens with a crowd gazing up at an eclipse and builds to a climax in which the eclipsed sun appears to fall from the sky into a pool of water (shots not from *East of Borneo*). In between, Rose Hobart's troubled gaze confronts a series of men, monkeys, crocodiles, and volcanoes with curiously mournful eroticism. (*Tristes Tropiques* was an alternate title Cornell later considered.) Such a "story" makes only dream-sense; hence the logic of the first sequence, in which our heroine awakens from confused sleep dressed as a man.

Cornell distanced himself from the dream theories of European surrealists, but he too found inspiration in the overlap between waking life and the nightmares that beset him. Salvador Dalí apparently recognized *Rose Hobart*'s mastery of surrealism and justified his rage by explaining to Julien Levy, "My idea for a film is exactly that, and I was going to propose it to someone. . . . I never wrote it or told anyone, but it is as *if* he had stolen it." (The shy Cornell was quite upset by the incident. "Why? Why?" he asked Levy, "when he is such a great man and I am nobody at all?")

As with his boxes, Cornell could make brilliant art seem simple, as if anyone could do it. But, also as with his boxes, spectators are forced to discover for themselves links among the

fragments. Of the films in this anthology, *Rose Hobart* most repays repeated viewings.—SS

About the Preservation In 1969 Cornell gave the only print of *Rose Hobart* to Anthology Film Archives, which made preservation copies to his specifications on color stock. Roughness is part of *Rose Hobart's* aesthetic. Neither Anthology's preservation nor our video transfer tries to "clean up" its image or sound. Film preservation purists may be pleased to know that *East of Borneo* survives in complete copies. (The Museum of Modern Art is now the rights holder to the Joseph Cornell films; requests for material should be sent to MoMA.)

Further Reading Since the late 1950s, collage films have become a vital avant-garde form, surveyed in William C. Wees's *Recycled Images: The Art and Politics of Found Footage Films* (1993, Anthology Film Archives). A fine biographical survey is Deborah Solomon's *Utopia Parkway: The Life and Work of Joseph Cornell* (1997, Farrar, Straus & Giroux). Cornell constructed many boxes about female movie stars, the subject of Jodi Hauptman's *Joseph Cornell: Stargazing in the Cinema* (1999, Yale Univ. Press).

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A JEEP (1943)

Production Company U.S. Office of War Information
Producer / Director Irving Lerner
Writer Joseph Krumgold
Photographer Roger Barlow
Editor Gene Fowler, Jr.
Narrator Robert Sloan
Transfer Note Copied from a 35mm positive preprint preserved by the National Archives and Records Administration.
Running Time 10 minutes

The Autobiography of a Jeep and *The Battle of San Pietro* (in Program Two) show two extremes of U.S. government documentary production during World War II. Where *San Pietro* is unflinching, *The Autobiography of a Jeep* makes its points with wit.

It was the job of the Office of War Information's Overseas Branch, producer of this film, to convey both facts and feelings about American democratic life to audiences abroad, military and civilian. OWI films are propagandistic and patriotic, befitting their wartime mission, and at their best resonate with a heartfelt optimism.

The Autobiography of a Jeep is narrated by the jeep itself in an unassuming, populist voice. The film interweaves a lighthearted vision of a democratic vehicle with accurate facts about the jeep's creation, size, and capabilities. The script was by Joseph Krumgold, whose direct prose also brought him Newberry Medals for his children's books *And Now Miguel* (1954) and *Onion John* (1960). Director Irving Lerner had honed his documentary skills at the Frontier Films collective in the late 1930s and after the war directed critically acclaimed,

minuscule-budget independent features.

As it became clear in 1940 that Germany and Italy were racing victoriously through Europe and North Africa, the U.S. Army issued specifications for a simple, rugged vehicle to be created within forty-nine days. The first working prototype was displayed before the September deadline. By the end of the war in 1945, more than seven hundred thousand jeeps had been produced by the Willys-Overland Company, owner of the design, and the Ford Motor Company. The film recounts the origin of the name "jeep" in the quick pronunciation of "G.P."—although the initials initially came not from "General Purpose" but from Ford's duller production abbreviation: "G" for government vehicle and "P" being the symbol for eighty-inch-wheelbase cars. When *The Autobiography of a Jeep* was released midwar in 1943, the Allies could look to successes—reflected in the shots of President Roosevelt riding in a jeep to meet with Churchill at Casablanca after the victory in North Africa.

The film celebrates the American can-do spirit of mass production at the same time as it humanizes the vehicle. A surprising number of World War II–era books for children and adults also featured talking jeeps, who typically dislike playing in the mud but end by performing heroically with their soldier pals—*The Little Jeep* (1942), *"Watch Me," Said the Jeep* (1944), and *Jerry the Jeep* (1945) among them. Clearly the jeep had won acceptance as the people's vehicle. "The rumor is going around that the jeep is here to stay," this film ends prophetically. Postwar jeeps were marketed to returning servicemen as farm and construction vehicles in Willys-Overland ads: "When I get back, I'll get a Jeep. It'll make a swell delivery car!"—SS

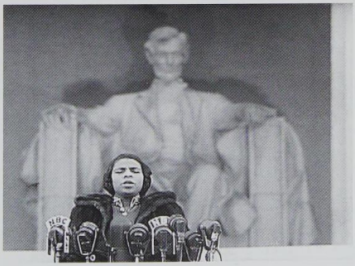
From MARIAN ANDERSON: THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL CONCERT (1939)

Transfer Note One sequence transferred from a 35mm print preserved and reconstructed by the UCLA Film and Television Archive.

Running Time 8 minutes

We end this anthology with a major work-in-progress. Using its extensive Hearst Metrotone News Collection and an NBC radio broadcast, the UCLA Film and Television Archive is creating, insofar as surviving material makes it possible, a full concert film of a key event in U.S. civil rights history: the 1939 Easter Sunday concert at the Lincoln Memorial by the African American contralto Marian Anderson.

As detailed in UCLA's headnotes on the film, in early 1939 the Daughters of the American Revolution declined music impresario Sol Hurok's request to book Marian Anderson into its Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. Her race was evidently the reason. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt then resigned from the DAR, an act that increased public awareness of the controversy. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes arranged



for a concert on the Lincoln Memorial steps. On April 9, 1939, Marian Anderson sang before a live audience of seventy-five thousand and a national radio audience of millions more.

Seen here is a draft of UCLA's re-creation of the first eight minutes of the event, including Ickes's introduction and Anderson's first number, "America." Something of a national hymn for the United States, its tune goes back to the seventeenth century and was used in Britain to accompany "God Save the King." Anderson sings two stanzas of the 1832 "My Country 'Tis of Thee" lyrics, written primarily by Samuel F. Smith.

For her remaining five concert selections, Anderson sang classical arias and gospel spirituals, and she concluded with the encore "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen." Although she had not planned to comment, at the end she told the audience, "I am overwhelmed. I just can't talk. I can't tell you what you have done for me today. I thank you from the bottom of my heart again and again."

The politics aside, Marian Anderson had a voice like few others and a way of seeming to reach not just her famous three-octave range but into a deep emotional core that held audiences spellbound. The unifying idealism of "America" from this singer in this setting made for an unrepeatable moment. UCLA's reconstruction helps bring it back to us.—SS

About the Preservation

Funding for this project is being provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Ahmanson Foundation, the Joseph Drown Foundation, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the National Film Preservation Foundation. Technical services are by Film Technology Company, Audio Mechanics, and DJ Audio.

Further Reading

The first full biography of Marian Anderson is Allan Keiler's *Marian Anderson: A Singer's Journey* (2000, Scribner).